

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 386

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of William A. Bridgforth, Sr.  
of Johnson City.

WHEREAS, it was with great sadness and a profound sense of loss that the members of this General Assembly and the citizens of our state learned of the death of one of our most respected businessmen and beloved citizens, William A. Bridgforth, Sr.; and

WHEREAS, born in Blackstone, Virginia, in 1916, he started working at an early age to help support his mother, a single parent; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bridgforth attended North Carolina State College, where he was a very popular and highly regarded student; and

WHEREAS, he served gallantly as a major in the United States Army during World War II, courageously capturing five German towns and a German airfield with two other officers and their driver in 1944; and helping the feeding and recuperation of ex-prisoners of war at the Dachau German Concentration Camp, in 1945; and

WHEREAS, Major Bridgforth received many citations for his bravery, including the Bronze Star and the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster; and

WHEREAS, after the war he moved to Johnson City, where he became an important part of that community; and

WHEREAS, his first business venture was in the retail automobile industry; he became the Chief Operating Officer of the Holston Motor Company, which under his dynamic guidance was very profitable, and for his considerable expertise in the automobile industry he received many awards; and

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WHEREAS, in 1958, Mr. Bridgforth became vice-president and Chief Operating Officer of the Tri-City Beverage Corporation, located in Johnson City; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, he invented a new soft drink formula and, a year later, contracted with the Tip Corporation to use his formula for this new drink, Mountain Dew, a drink now enjoyed by millions of persons daily; and

WHEREAS, at a time when the large, major brand soft drink bottlers were increasing production, Mr. Bridgforth ran a successful small, non-major brand soft drink bottling plant in the 1970s and 1980s; and

WHEREAS, his contributions to the soft drink industry were specially noted with a front page article in the July 28, 1994, *Wall Street Journal*; and

WHEREAS, a pillar of the Johnson City community for his civic and charitable endeavors, Mr. Bridgforth strongly demonstrated the finest traditions of the "Volunteer State"; and

WHEREAS, he generously contributed his time to many worthwhile groups, including the Boy Scouts of America, the Optimist Club, and the Southern Appalachian Ronald McDonald House; and

WHEREAS, in 1988, the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America recognized Mr. Bridgforth's outstanding contributions to the group by awarding him its prestigious Distinguished Eagle Scout Award; and

WHEREAS, a devout and devoted member of the Johnson City First Presbyterian Church, he had served God and the church faithfully as a Sunday school teacher, Deacon, Elder, and as Elder Emeritus; and

WHEREAS, since their marriage in 1946, Mr. Bridgforth, Sr. has enjoyed the loving companionship of Burgess Allen Kiser Bridgforth; this was truly a marriage "made in heaven"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bridgforth was the proud parent of three successful children, William A. Bridgforth, Jr., Richard Kiser Bridgforth, and Jane Burgess Bridgforth; and grandparents of five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, the legacy William A. Bridgforth, Sr. leaves behind will be long remembered and treasured by his numerous friends and associates; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that this legislative body pause in its deliberations to remember the exemplary life of this fine Tennessean; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of William Bridgforth, Sr., remembering with heartfelt admiration his exemplary character and many selfless contributions to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our deepest sympathy to his family and friends.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copies.